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(2020) *Vetusta Monumenta*; Volume 2, Plate 14: A Plan of the Ground and Buildings in the Strand, called the Savoy, taken in the Year 1736. Society of Antiquaries of London.

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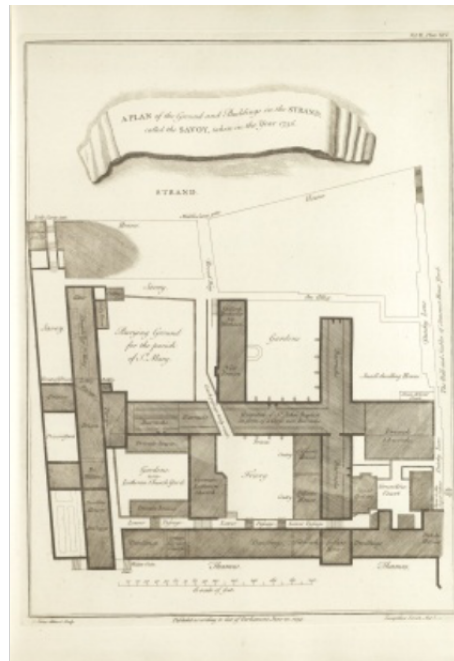
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Plate 2.14: Plan of the Savoy

- Plate

Plate:



(http://scalar.missouri.edu/~dzi/vm2014/dzc_output.dzi) Engraved by George Vertue (1684–1756) in 1754 after his own drawings, originally made in 1736 (Alexander 2008, 383). This plate follows Plates 2.5 (<https://scalar.missouri.edu/vm/vol2plate5-view-of-savoy>) (1750) and 2.12 (<https://scalar.missouri.edu/vm/vol2plate12-savoy-hospital>) (1753) as the last in a series of engravings of the Savoy Hospital complex. The drawing for this plate, a two-dimensional ground plan depicting the layout of buildings and streets at the site, was first shown before the Society of Antiquaries on 28 November 1751, after the publication of Plate 2.5 but before the drawings for Plate 2.12 were either exhibited or published. The drawing for Plate 2.14 was not taken up again by the Society until 10 January 1754, when “a motion was made and seconded that Mr. Virtue [sic] be desired to engrave the Plan of the Savoy” that was originally introduced three years earlier (SAL Minutes VII.98). This motion passed at the next meeting, on 17 January 1754, and Plate 2.14 was published later that year.

- Object

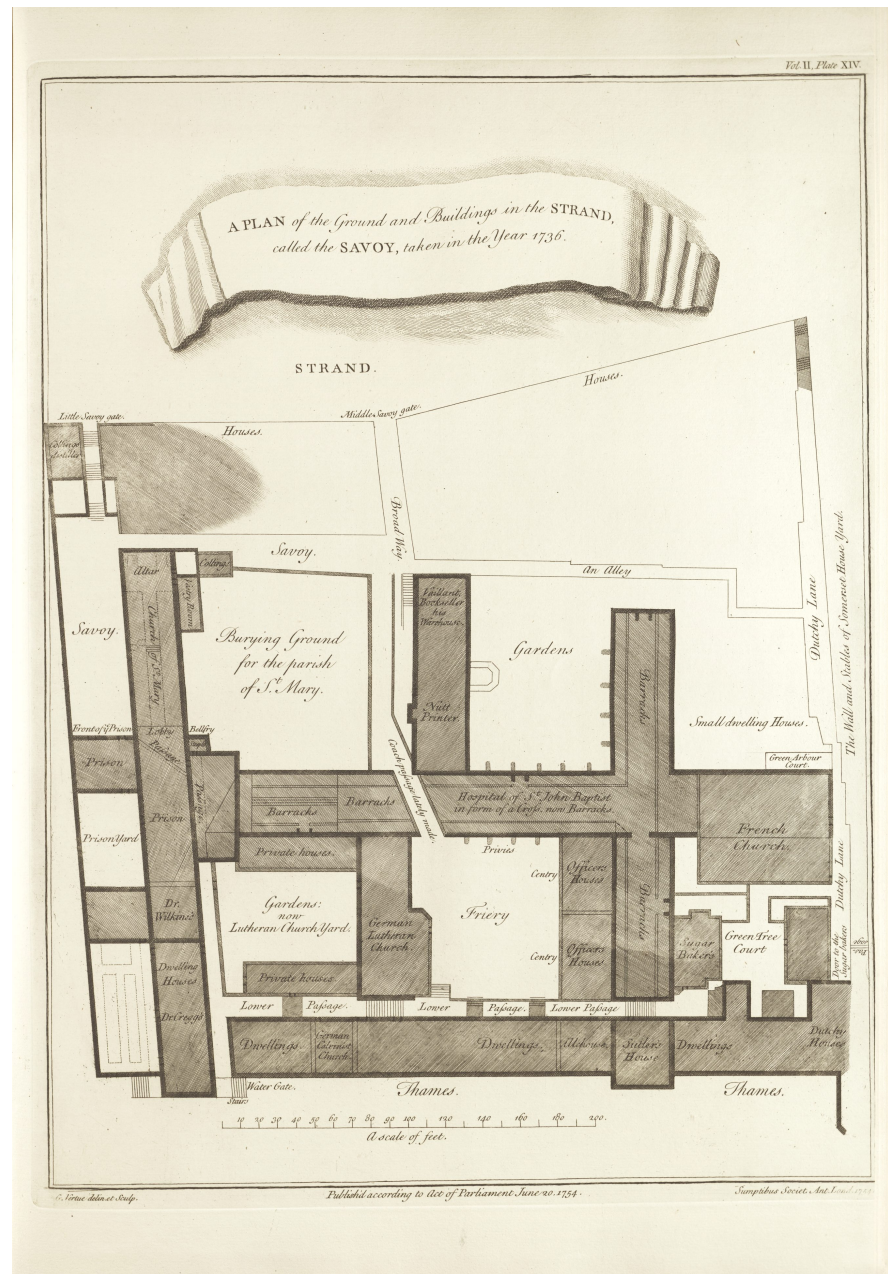
Object:

Plate 2.14 of Vetusta Monumenta [to be completed]

(<https://scalar.missouri.edu/vm/media/vm2-14.jpg>) The plate delineates the ground plan of buildings forming what was previously the Savoy Hospital, dedicated in 1509 to St John the Baptist and rebuilt in the very early sixteenth century following orders from Henry VII. By 1736, these buildings had taken on numerous other functions, including barracks, a prison, churches, private dwellings, a warehouse, and the King's printing press. The vast majority of these buildings were destroyed by fire in 1776; any remaining fragments were swept away after 1816 to make way for the approach to Waterloo Bridge that crosses the Thames and links Victoria Embankment with the South Bank. The only surviving building from this complex as recorded by Vertue in 1736 is the Hospital Chapel, seen on the top left of the plate. This is

now The Queen's Chapel of the Savoy.

- Transcription

Transcription:

A PLAN of the Ground and Buildings in the STRAND, called the SAVOY, taken in the Year 1736.

G. Vertue delin. et Sculp. Publish'd according to the Act of Parliament June 20. 1754. Sumptibus Societ. Ant. Lond. 1754.

- Translation

Translation:

G[eorge] Vertue, draftsman and engraver. Published by the Society of Antiquaries of London.

- Commentary

Commentary by Peter N. Lindfield: The third of three plates by Vertue taken of the former Savoy Hospital in London appears as Plate 14 in the second volume of *Vetusta Monumenta*. Unlike his two earlier plates delineating the elevation of the complex from across the river Thames (Plate 2.5 (<https://scalar.missouri.edu/vm/vol2plate5-view-of-savoy>)), and of the entrance to the prison and the hospital chapel (Plate 2.12 (<https://scalar.missouri.edu/vm/vol2plate12-savoy-hospital>)), this plate is an annotated plan of the various buildings comprising the complex. Whilst unusual in the context of Vertue's other plates concerning the Savoy, this is a vital record of the site and its exact layout, something that architects, designers, and antiquaries have regularly acknowledged. The three-dimensionality of Vertue's other plates recording the Savoy is continued on this plate by incorporating a *trompe l'oeil* banderole that presents the plate's title, the same device employed on Plate 2.5 (<https://scalar.missouri.edu/vm/vol2plate5-view-of-savoy>), although it is executed in a cruder fashion here.

A ground plan helps make sense of a building's layout and scale without distortion from perspective: Georgian architects and designers regularly

produced ground plans to help clients understand their proposals and also to guide the builders. Of the many possible examples from this period, Sir John Vanbrugh's *Sketch plan and elevation, Sir William Saunderson's House, Greenwich* (<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O205507/sketch-plan-and-elevation-sir-design-vanbrugh-john-sir/>)(1718-1720), now in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, demonstrates the value of plans as visual records particularly well.

The practicality of such plans is further suggested by Vertue's inclusion of a scale on his plan of the Savoy. He included a scale for both the upper and lower scenes on his previous plate depicting the Savoy (Plate 2.12 (<https://scalar.missouri.edu/vm/vol2plate12-savoy-hospital>)), but these scales lack metrics: they are essentially useless. There is also a fundamental problem with including scales for buildings represented within three-dimensional schemes as it is impossible to calibrate such scales to accommodate foreshortening.

Plates 2.1 and 2.2 (<https://scalar.missouri.edu/vm/vol2plates1-2-plans-london-after-1666>) of *Vetusta Monumenta* are plans for the rebuilding of London following the 1666 fire, and they are also scaled; however, the large reduction in scale here makes the sizing vague at best. Vertue's plan of the Savoy offers the potential to read off measurements far more accurately. The true value of this plate lies in Vertue's detailed recording of what the various parts of the Hospital building were used for in 1736. It is possible to see, for example, which buildings make up the prison, barracks, private housing, and various churches. In sum, it records the changing functions of a site set up by Henry VII for the purpose of supporting the poor.

Further detail of the history of the Savoy and the complex of buildings as a whole may be found in the commentary to Plate 2.5 (<https://scalar.missouri.edu/vm/vol2plate5-view-of-savoy>), *A View of the Savoy from the River Thames*.

- Works Cited

Works Cited:

Vanbrugh, John. 1718-1720. Sketch plan and elevation of Sir William Saunderson's House, Greenwich. Prints and Drawings Study Room, E.2124:129-1992. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



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Updated 14/07/2020 | Metadata (<https://scalar.missouri.edu/vm/vol2plate14-plan-of-the-savoy.meta>)



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